

# Department of Justice High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project *Washington, DC*



## Addressing Interoperability

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Wireless Management Office (WMO) has been working toward improving long-term federal interagency communications across the Nation. As an interim step, and as a response to a request from the House/Senate CJS Appropriations Subcommittee staff, the DOJ WMO has been leading the High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project to provide targeted cities with basic and immediate interagency communications capabilities among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency response. Twenty-five cities were selected using criteria that included perceived risk and population size. As stakeholders in 1 of the 25 cities, Washington, DC metropolitan area local and federal public safety agencies have been working collaboratively with the DOJ WMO to address basic interoperable communications.

## Participating Agencies

Partnership among Washington, DC area local and federal public safety agencies as well as the private sector has been instrumental in the development of comprehensive interoperability solution set. Participating agencies have included—

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
- CSX Police
- DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services
- DC Metropolitan Police Department
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Federal Protective Service
- U.S. Army
- U.S. Capitol Police
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)
- U.S. Park Police
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)
- U.S. Secret Service (USSS)

## Key Successes

DOJ and area stakeholders have planned to successfully achieve basic interoperability and emergency response communications improvements in the Washington, DC metropolitan area through the implementation of a cross band interoperability solution. The solution will support the use of existing communications resources and provide connectivity between disparate radio system users. Additionally, in the course of meeting this project's interoperability goals, stakeholders were able to expand the working relationships among local and federal agencies to resolve interoperability objectives for the area.

The solution bridges very high frequency (VHF) and ultra high frequency (UHF) resources to support local to federal and federal to federal operations. One cross banded VHF/UHF resource will support federal VHF and UHF users with direct access and connectivity with the District of Columbia Fire and EMS and Police. This resource will provide portable radio coverage in the DC area utilizing several repeater and satellite receiver sites.

The second VHF/UHF cross banded resource supports federal only operations for federal VHF and UHF users requiring encrypted communications. This resource provides coverage to users substantially north and south of the DC metropolitan area through several repeater and satellite receiver sites. Both the VHF and UHF equipment will be maintained by the USMS.

When implemented, this solution will provide interoperable communications between local and federal agencies in the VHF and UHF bands whether they are local to the DC area or deployed from across the country. This solution can also take advantage of and leverage existing interoperable communications connectivity available through the DC Emergency Communications Center.

To address management issues related to the new interoperability equipment, DOJ worked with local and federal stakeholders to develop standard operating procedures (SOP) to outline the use of the multi-band communications equipment and to ensure proper operation of those resources. Assistance included developing SOPs and other interoperability resource guides to serve as quick references for public safety personnel.

## Moving Forward

The cooperation and support between participating agencies and the DOJ WMO provided scalable solutions designed to give additional agencies access to the interoperability solutions. Sustained operations, maintenance, and support of these interoperability solutions will be coordinated by key stakeholders. These efforts, along with stakeholder support, will ensure continuity in addressing interoperable communications among public safety agencies in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

The interoperability solutions are expected to be fully functional by the end of 2006.

## Contact Information

If you would like to know more about this initiative and the interoperability solutions, please contact—

### USMS

Steve Tocci  
USMS  
(703) 285-3245  
[Steven.tocci@usdoj.gov](mailto:Steven.tocci@usdoj.gov)

### DOJ WMO

Rob Zanger  
DOJ WMO  
(703) 322-1675  
[Robert.m.zanger@usdoj.gov](mailto:Robert.m.zanger@usdoj.gov)